

**Minutes of School Committee Meeting with the Committee on Appropriations 05/07/14**

A meeting of the Barrington School Committee and the Barrington Committee on Appropriations was held on Wednesday, May 7, 2014, in the Senior Center, Barrington Public Library. The School Committee was called to order by Mrs. Brody at 7:04 p.m. and present were Mrs. Brody, Dr. Dominguez, Mr. Guida and Dr. Shea. Mr. Fuller was absent. Mr. Messore and Mr. Tarro joined the School Committee for the joint meeting. Committee on Appropriations (COA) members Geoff Grove, Peter Clifford, Chad Mollica and Joel Hellman were in attendance.

After taking care of some housekeeping issues, the meeting turned to a discussion of the school district budget for 2014-2015. Mr. Grove indicated that the COA supports the district's priorities, but that its members were in disagreement with the "buffer" or surplus from last year and prior years that they believe is embedded in the school district's budget. Mr. Grove indicated that the COA had voted at its April 22 meeting to increase the district's operational budget by \$900,000. He also stated that the COA had listened to the school district's prior comments on how technology has been funded, and that it voted to include \$275,000 for the district's technology in the capital budget for the town. He pointed out that this amount was prioritized over a capital request in the municipal budget.

School Committee and COA members discussed the budget surplus and its history, and Mr. Hellman voiced the COA's shared opinion that the school district should not run such a high surplus every year. Mr. Guida pointed out that a number of costs (e.g., energy) have increased this year, and Mr. Grove replied that this increase, as well as additional funds for All Day Kindergarten, was reflected in the \$900,000 allocation from the COA. Mr. Clifford described what he believed is a more transparent process for handling capital investments from year to year. In response, Mr. Tarro described how capital reserve funds are used on improvements to preserve schools, yielding an immediate 35% return on investment for Barrington taxpayers.

School Committee and COA members discussed the acceleration of revenues from the state to Barrington that had taken place under the state's new funding formula. They also identified potential avenues available to the district for covering the difference between the district's proposed budget and the amount the COA had identified as an increase in the proposed operating budget. COA members posed questions about how the budget was created. Mr. Grove asked if the All Day Kindergarten budget took into account the fact that mid-day transportation would no longer be needed. In response, Mr. Messore identified how an external study had indicated that there were no major cost savings associated with this change in transportation since the uptick in the number of students generally offsets any savings from eliminating the mid-day run. Mrs. Brody summarized the procedure for moving the COA figure forward and asked if there is any flexibility in the final amount identified by the COA. In response, Mr. Grove asked the members of the COA if there was any support to award additional funding to the school district. COA members voiced some concerns about the district's budget, such as the teacher contracts that have been awarded and the need to provide taxpayers with a \$0 tax increase. Mr. Hellman stated that he would support an increase to \$1,000,000, conditional on the School Committee's support

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of that number at the Financial Town Meeting. Mr. Grove responded that the COA endorsed budget proposal cannot be conditional, and made a motion to increase the school district's budget to \$1,000,000. As there was no second to the motion, the motion did not carry. Mr. Grove indicated that the School Committee would have to consider the \$900,000 figure.

**Dr. Dominguez moved and Dr. Shea seconded the motion that the School Committee adjourn its meeting at 8:00 p.m. The motion passed 4-0 with Mrs. Brody, Dr. Dominguez, Mr. Guida and Dr. Shea voting in the affirmative for the motion.**